

Tidy Towns Competition 2026

Adjudication Report

Centre: **Clarecastle - Droichead an Chláir** Ref: **1082**
County: **Clare** Mark: **404**
Category: **C** Date(s): **08/06/2026**
26/07/2026

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2025	Mark Awarded 2026
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	80	54	56
Streetscape & Public Places	80	52	54
Green Spaces and Landscaping	80	54	56
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	80	47	49
Sustainability – Doing more with less	80	30	32
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	67	69
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	55	46	47
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	55	40	41
TOTAL MARK	600	390	404

Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:

Fáilte go Comórtas Bailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2026. Go raibh maith agaibh as bhur n-iarratas a chur isteach. Maith sibh as an obair atá déanta agaibh in bhur gceantar go dtí seo - guíonn muid gach rath oraibh in bhur dtionscadail amach anseo. Welcome back to the competition. We are delighted to have you return for another year. Good to read that you have a diverse skill set among your group with skills including gardening boat building project management and that you have sub-teams on community Heritage wildlife and Sustainable Clare Catholic group. You have 15 members and 20 to 25 volunteer and have a very active Facebook page with 860 followers with lots of updates on your activities and information explaining your methods and approach. It's great to see how well you use these platforms to inform, educate and update your community. This year we received nice succinct application with lots of photographs and detailed information. Thank you for reducing the size of your application to 30 pages. Keep going you can make it even shorter. I like your map layout and how each section is outlined and project numbered. It was helpful during adjudication,

It looks like you interact very well with many community groups such as the GAA, Pastoral Council, Men's Shed Roche Liaison Group in the village and delighted to read that community groups and residents Associations are getting increasingly interested in promoting sustainability and Biodiversity projects within their own organizations. It is obvious that you integrate well as a group within the community and I loved reading about your initiative to fundraise for a keyboard for the new choir that is set up in 2024. Great to see your support for other groups.

Congratulations on the launch of your community Plan on April 24th, 2026, I enjoyed reading it and thought it captured some wonderful objectives for enhancing your community. I'm sure your planned biodiversity plan will fully incorporate a full habitat assessment and actions to be taken support local biodiversity. We look forward to seeing it next year.

Great to read that you interact with the national school and congratulations to them for achieving their 9th Green flag. Wishing the group involved in the conservation of Church at Killoo every success. Great work done by all. Although Clarecastle is near Ennis it still very much has the village feel and has many of the types of businesses and residential houses that are in keeping with that village setting. You have a lovely wide green area right in the heart of the village with some beautifully mature trees including some majestic lime trees that really add to the look of the area.

Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:

Although Clarecastle is near Ennis it still very much has the village feel and has many of the types of businesses and residential houses that are in keeping with that village setting. You have a lovely wide green area right in the heart of the village with some beautifully mature trees including some majestic lime trees that really add to the look of the area.

Clarecastle National school building and Clarecastle church are very well presented. The school had lovely little window boxes with Marigolds and Violas giving a great pop of colour. The Church and grounds are well maintained, and the church is beautifully painted. The children's playground looked great and I liked your seasonal biodiversity information signs on the fence,

Well done on completing phase 3 of the Clarecastle Abbey Hall upgrade with new energy efficient lighting and an upgrade to insulation and attic insulation. I'm sure this will be of benefit to many members of the Clarecastle community in coming winters.

I was really impressed with your replacement of the ugly overhead barriers with such attractive ironwork barriers including a bilingual name at the People's park and well done on the repair work to the damaged one at Clarecastle Quay and responding so quickly. These are such a great example of changing something ugly into a very attractive feature. Well done.

The writing on GAA memorial stone is a little faded and very difficult to read. I didn't see the mounting stone during my visit and am unsure if I missed it as I walked Barrack Street or if it is not in place as yet. Perhaps next year clearly mark its location.

Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:

Thank you for working during February and March, which were particularly inclement months this year, to enhance the hedgerow between the school and the church by planting 400 whips. We hope they thrive and make a handsome hedge.

The two mixed shrub and flower bed near The Castle Coffee house are very well planted and looks like they will give a full season of interest. There is also a nicely maintained shrub area to the right as you enter under the beautiful new iron gate to the Port of Clare. It was visually very attractive and well barked and shaped. The Rosemary and Sedum beds near the church and the containers including a well clipped topiary in pots look impressive at the church entrance. Nice to see the signposted managed for pollinator area at the church and I was delighted to see a spotted orchid in your no mow area at the church grounds. The grotto at the church was neat and tidy. Well done moving over to more perennial style planting. You are very successfully transitioning to this approach. It is more sustainable and better for our pollinators Perhaps consider taking this approach with the boat in front of the monument on Barrack Street. It is planted full of pelargoniums which are of no benefit. Perhaps reconsider more pollinator friendly planting choices here. The large containers at the plaza area were mainly bedding style plants but they did include pollinator friendly plants such as Lobelia and Bidsens.

Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:

Well done on your pollinator friendly bulb planting, early flowering bulbs are a great benefit to our pollinators and visually very pleasant to see. How many bulbs did you plant?

Clarecastle is blessed with lots of green spaces and a very mature tree line. Lots well established beautiful trees but the element that's missing is the mid story planting. The planting of native hedges offers great benefit to wildlife in the area and as mentioned above you have made a great start in this area. Native hedgerows are great as sources of nectar and pollen, they offer places to shelter, nest and overwinter and they act as corridors for pollinators to travel across the landscape. Lots more space in the People's park and at the GAA grounds to add more native hedges.

The wildflower areas at the GAA are full of clover and other native flowers, Daisies, oxeye daisies, thistles and plenty more to come. It is the ideal area to let the grass grow long and perhaps mow some paths through it for residents and visitors to enjoy. There's also a nice area of scrub at the back with Elderflower Ivy and brambles all providing for wildlife in the area. It's great to leave these areas untouched and will offer shelter, food and nesting habitats for small mammal invertebrates and birds. Great to read they have a green officer now at the GAA and that they planted 25 trees at the entrance. Sadly though it does look like herbicide was sprayed along the drive into the GAA pitch. The community garden here had some nice cabbages, but it was a little untidy and unloved in spots. The apple trees in your Hares corner look maintained and are well mulched. This be an ideal undisturbed area to work on creating many different habitats to support nature which is what Hare's Corner is all about. There is opportunity to leave areas of this whole section unmown to allow the grass to grow a little longer maybe include some yellow rattle which will allow the wildflowers to come through and suppress the grasses. Yellow rattle really does work at reducing grass vigor and make more space for wildflowers. Sow after you have mowed and removed the grass in autumn and it will establish in no time. Native yellow rattle seed is available from Burren Beo and other good native Irish seed suppliers. Leave some areas unmown completely to leave nesting areas for overwintering insects and nest sites for bumble bees.

Another habitat you could create here would be to put in a dead hedge. Dead wood supports many invertebrates and as you will have lots from your ash die back issues as well as naturally fallen from the mature trees in the area, this wood could be used to support the creation of a dead hedge. Building a dead hedge with the local National School students would be a fun project. You can build Dead hedges anywhere but close to the source of the wood makes most sense, Further info can be found at <https://theharescorner.ie/resources/dead-hedge/>.

Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:

Thank you for following up on your adjudicators advice last year in weighing the rubbish you gathered doing your spring clean. It's nice to have a baseline to see if this does reduce and improve going forward.

Additionally your additional activities in tackling the area of waste reduction are very commendable. You carried out research into the number of disposable cups used by Clarecastle residents of 120k annual to mounting a campaign to reduce and eliminate single use hot drink cups with the introduction after appropriate research of a high-quality reusable cups with local community insignia. It's good to read that you had good uptake and commitment from the GAA, the Clarecastle Regatta, and the Clarecastle Show to work with Circular Clarecastle to eliminate single-use

disposable cups at their events, that could further reduce cold drinks disposable cups and bottles by up to 50,000 units within 12 months. This is wonderful work.

Well done to the Climate Actions Work group that delivered a community-wide campaign on climate action & the circular economy reaching 6000 people double the initial target. I watched some of the videos on the Clarecastle website and thought they have created great examples of the simple types of actions we can all take to be more sustainable. It's great to read they got so much air play with 30000 hits.

Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:

Clarecastle tidy towns are very focused in this section with an established Good Friday morning annual Spring Clean day. It's heartening to read that you're a lot of groups registered and you had a big turnout at Clare Abbey Well done too on having a riverbank cleanup that took place on Sat 28th March Glad to read that rubbish was down with 12 full bags of rubbish collected.

Great actions have also been taken in cleaning signage, signage removal cutting back vegetation around signs and highlighting to clear County Council issues such as faded speed limit less signage and hidden signage. Well done. The mid Clare Way sign in the plaza area could do with a clean.

For the most part Clarecastle village was very neat and tidy during the visit with just a few small random pieces of rubbish to be seen in the area but most of it was fresh. There's a dead tree on Patricks Street. Perhaps removing the branches and using the trunk you could turn it into a cavity bee nesting habitat. Use a drill to make holes of various sizes in its trunk- holes of different diameters attract different types of bees. The holes should be at minimum 10cm in depth and 4-10mm in diameter.

Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:

All the estates visited were well presented and well maintained. As mentioned, there are some very attractively maintained residences and gardens. Some estates have lovely mature trees but many more have large expanses of open green areas that could have native hedging, mini orchards or native trees added. There lots of opportunity to leave some more areas of the grass unmown or grown into low meadows with only cutting every 4 -6 weeks. In St Josephs terrace at the back of the estate there is some Snowberry which is an invasive species that can form a thick thicket and suppress the growth of native plants. Would suggest removing if possible. I particularly liked the terraced houses on Main Street painted some nice pastel tones and the very attractive cottages and two-story stone terraces on Quay Street

Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:

Approaching Clarecastle from the Limerick side the welcome to Clarecastle sign is nice and neat with signage clearly visible. Perhaps there's opportunity here to put a little raised bed below this and plant up with some perennial flowers at the base of the sign. This would be true for the sign as you approach from the Ennis side too. The hanging baskets are placed on the bridge and settling in for the season and I'm sure will give great colour and display. This type of planting although very attractive is not very sustainable as they are annual blooms. Consider moving away from baskets in the long term.

Concluding Remarks:

The committee, volunteers and all the residents of Clarecastle are doing some great work in areas of preserving local heritage, sustainability, supporting nature and biodiversity and making your community a better place to live. Keep up the good work and best wishes for the future.

Second Round Adjudication:

We were delighted to visit Clarecastle for your second-round adjudication. On our visit, one of our first impressions was how you have kept a very strong sense of your own identity despite being so close to a larger town. We also appreciated the efforts you have made to look after your heritage. We enjoyed your community website and appreciated its emphasis on heritage sites in the area. We enjoyed your Facebook page; it gives a great insight into your work, and we like how you use it to educate people about Tidy Towns. Have you considered posting a little more frequently? Well done to the members of the Killoo Heritage Group for developing a website for the project; it gives a great insight into this medieval site. The website demonstrates the connection between the local community and this heritage site and provides an impressive amount of information about the site.

This would help to build followers and raise the profile of the page. On your application, we would like to reiterate the advice of the first adjudicator and encourage you to be mindful of the volume of material that you are submitting. Your cross-community collaborative way of working is noted positively by this adjudicator; Clarecastle has an impressive range of voluntary groups that work together to improve the lives of residents. You have a range of festivals that take place over the summer months. Are any of these festivals taking sustainability actions? The local prevention website has an excellent guide to greening festivals-<https://localprevention.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Guide-Green-your-Festival-Plan.pdf>. The The networking group that you are part of is an excellent initiative; cross-community learning is so important and is a great way to develop ideas for new projects.

During our visit, what impressed us about your public spaces was your attention to detail and the tidiness of public spaces. We noted positively the work that you have put into managing derelict sites. When we walked along Patrick's Street, we admired the different shop fronts that had been left in place; these added character to the street. We were glad to see you had not lost your post office and that it has been moved to the Centra. Vesuvio takeaway stood out as having an excellent floral display.

We are looking forward to seeing the mounting block returned to Barrack Street. We admired your beds at the

intersection and Patrick's Street which have certainly added colour to the street. We also noted how well your hanging baskets have stood up to the recent drought.

Although begonias are not ideal for wildlife, they are robust plants that can grow in challenging locations. Have you considered developing a corridor of pollinator-friendly planting through the village? It could be linked into your new biodiversity plan. We admire your pollinator-friendly landscape around the church, which was very effective; you have achieved a lot in a small space. We noted your efforts in managing shrub beds throughout the village. We were very impressed with the long-term and sustained efforts you have put into improving the walking infrastructure in the community. We are looking forward to seeing your Biodiversity Action Plan for Clarecastle. We liked the emphasis on education and community engagement in your plan. Have you considered ways you can encourage your residents to take actions in their gardens to enhance biodiversity? We were very impressed by the wildlife meadows on the grounds of the GAA pitch. We appreciated the planting of your native Irish wildflower meadow, and it was good to see the children involved in its planting.

The Green Flag was flying over the beautifully presented National School. Well done on getting your Active Travel Flag. We appreciated your two different community gardens, such a positive way to encourage people to get involved in gardening. At the new garden, have you considered developing a mini library where people can share gardening books? We enjoyed reading about your Men's Shed activities; they are a talented group that have incorporated sustainability and community involvement into their every action. We admired the tidiness of public areas and streets in Clarecastle and the emphasis that you have put into managing signage over the last number of years. We admired the efforts that you have gone to in organising a clean-up of the River Fergus. Residential areas were very well kept and we admired the mural on the wall by Garden View. We really enjoyed our first visit Clarecastle and we admired the strong community spirit and the efforts that community group have gone to create an inclusive community. You have also put a lot of effort into protecting the local heritage.